



Cirice abo Crist thē Croisé



A Black Thorn Publication

In Remembrance, 2018

Speaking Truth to Power: Canadian War Crimes in Korea

A history professor uncovers some troubling evidence from the Korean War.

By Steven Denney, 3 November 2014, Diplomat Media Inc.

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”
George Santayana, 1905 - *Life of Reason, Reason in Common Sense*,
Scribner's, 1905, page 284



Canadians are typically known for one thing: excessive kindness. While there may be some truth to the stereotype, the positive perception of Canadians today should not get in the way of unearthing and laying bare **crimes committed by Canadians during the Korean War**, argues **Dr. John Price**, professor of history at the *University of Victoria*.

On Friday, October 24th, Price spoke at “*The Afterlives of the Korean War*” - an *annual symposium* of the Center for the Study of Korea (CSK) at the *University of Toronto*.



South Korean **Wianbu** “Comfort Women” (i.e. prostitutes)

The Canadian Military in Somalia: Torture, Murder and Inquiry

We promised them peacekeepers, and in some cases, we sent them thugs.

From The Guardian - UK - Saturday, 23 May 2009

“*Secrecy* is a basic component of the *Policy of Torture*: It is essential to *the structure of torture* that everything takes place in secret, in the dark, beyond consideration of shame or account. When the torturer assures his victim *that “no one will ever know,”* he is at once working to break the victim’s spirit and bolster his own.

From “*Settling Accounts with Torturers*” by Lawrence Welsher



Three of 16 photographs taken by Private Kyle Brown and Master Corporal Clayton Matchee, during the beating death of Somali teenager Shidane Abukar Arone (17 March 1993).

“On Unfinished Wars and the Politics of the Past”

On the panel, Price delivered a speech titled “*Burying the Past: Canadian War Crimes in Korea.*” Culled from the research that went into his book “*Orienting Canada: Race, Empire and the Transpacific,*” the speech focused on *the story of Shin Hyun-chan*, a survivor of *an unprovoked attack by a Canadian soldier* in 1951 that left Shin wounded and his father dead. (The story, as written by Price, can be read at *Japan Focus*.)

Price learned of Shin’s grievance after being notified by his South Korean colleagues that Shin had filed *a claim against the Canadian military for war crimes*. After gaining access to the *Canadian Press archives*, Price was able to locate the perpetrator: **John Murray Steeves**, a Canadian soldier with the *57th Independent Field Squadron of the Royal Canadian Engineers*. While the motivations are unclear, testimonies indicate that Steeves was likely *intoxicated* and *looking for trouble*. Further *archival evidence* reveals that Steeves was *eventually court martialed* and *sentenced to 15 years for manslaughter*.

While it seems that justice was served, additional archival digging by Price discloses a troubling fact: Steeves was *eventually freed after a judge advocate general found he had been wrongfully convicted*. While this may very well be true (*further information on the case has yet to be located*), the number of cases similar to Shin’s is enough to make a strong argument that his tragic run-in with the Canadian military was not an isolated event. Many **Canadian war crimes** went *basically unpunished*. Even more troubling, the Canadian government (specifically the Ministry of Defense) appears unwilling to re-open these cases. For example, *an official request by Price to look further into Shin’s case was refused*.

Price’s research found that *rape and murder by Canadian and other UN forces* were *not infrequent occurrences*. The total number “remains unverified... [but] was *substantial* and *exceeded anything seen during the fighting in Europe and WW II.*” Price does not ignore the sacrifices made by Canadian soldiers and the “*sense of humanity towards the Korean people*” showed by some. But his point is not to extol the military; it is to render problematic the *myth of the “kind Canadian,”* a notion that Canada held itself to a higher moral standard than others.

On the contrary, Price argues *that Canadians were violent and racist* - as the United States and other Anglo-Saxon nations involved in the Korean War. He thus joins the efforts of other historians and academics researching the postwar *radicalized and gendered hierarchies* of East-West (viz. Korea-West) relations. Similar to what the **Truth and Reconciliation Committee** attempted to do in South Korea, Price contends, “it is time to expand and coordinate the research on war crimes beyond the US archives, [remembering] that the war effort, though led by US command, was a UN action, and that Canada, Britain, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and others joined the UN forces.” While governments may stymie such efforts, it hasn’t stopped people like Price and other committed academics from speaking truth to power.

Canada’s national shame

Shidane Abukar Arone was *a Somali teenager* who was *tortured and beaten to death by Canadian soldiers* in the *Canadian Base in Somalia*, on 17 March 1993. Arone was caught on March 16th attempting to steal supplies from the Canadian military base. Two members of *Canada’s elite Airborne Regiment, Master Corporal Clayton Matchee* and *Private Kyle Brown*, bound Arone and tortured him over the next several hours. Ultimately, *he died of his injuries*.

While the military *initially* claimed Matchee and Brown had acted alone, it was later revealed that sixteen others had visited the tent while Arone was captive, including superior officers.

At first **DND** officials told the media that Arone had likely died from natural causes. It took several weeks for the Canadian people to become aware of the actual events in Somalia. An inquiry officially known as **The Somalia Commission of Inquiry** began in 1994 after public outcry.

The *military disengagement from accountability* and *evasion strategies* permeated the inquiry where *Air Force General Jean Boyle* blamed his subordinates for wrong doing. It ran until 1997 when it was cut short by the *Chrétien government* in the months before the 1997 election. The inquiry was never able to examine top level governmental decision-making, nor did it actually examine the alleged events in Somalia.

Conspicuously absent from the report is anything on the most sensitive aspect of the Somalia affair — the torture and murder of Shidane Arone.

The **Somalia Inquiry** debacle was a *high-level cover-up*... from witness who testified that *the lack of accountability* sent the wrong message to the troops and *that military police were deliberately stalled from investigating* a shooting by Canadian soldiers of unarmed Somalis in the back, killing one Somali and wounding another which took place just 12 days before the torture and murder of Shidane Arone.

The **Somalia Affair** thus had a direct impact on how the international community would make foreign policy with a crippling ‘**Somalia syndrome**’ that would lead to the sense of caution in intervening in the *Rwanda Genocide* and in the Balkans.

What other kinds of atrocities has Canada committed at home and around the world in their 150 year history?

Genocide entails more than just murder; there are other ways of exterminating cultures.

The *Somalia Atrocity* was Canada’s Abu Ghraib. The idea of *Canada as a peacekeeping nation* was a part of our collective identity *probably* since Suez, if not before. The whole affair shocked the nation when it happened, but even Canadians don’t remember this anymore *as these behaviors tend to be willfully forgotten as quickly as possible*.

Very few have any knowledge of the *indiscriminate slaughter of First Nations folk* by the British prior to Confederation... and, *thereafter*, the many *crimes against humanity* committed by that *drunken commie Sir John A.’s Red River Expeditionary Force* during the **1869-70 Riel Rebellion** and *again* by his *genocidal mercenary “red-coat” Francophobes of the Mounted Rifles* in the North-West Territories in 1885, whence they hanged the prophet of the prairies, **St-Louis “David” Riel des Métis**... not to mention *Chinese labor conditions building the trans-Canada railroad*.

In **Residential Schools**, countless *aboriginal children* were *separated from their families by churches* trying to civilize them and beat their culture out of them. Kids were ripped away from their parents and basically tortured into being purely Anglo-Catholic... to never act or appear as “savages,” as they were referred to thence - and Protestants, *too*, worked in collusion with the State to form the boarding school system. Children would be punished severely for *speaking in native tongue* in an *attempted reprogramming* by *mentally, sexually, and physically abusing many and damaging a whole generation*. The *punishments often led to death*. The *forced assimilation* also exposed children and adults alike to *massive outbreaks of tuberculosis and smallpox*... moreover, there have been plenty of stories of the government doing *experiments on native people because they were deemed, more-or-less expendable*. And, although the government *eventually* was forced into formally apologizing... it was too little too late. [The 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide based on part e of Article 2 which is “Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group – *infer* “Sons of Freedom.”]

But it was the South African *Boer Wars* against the *Afrikaner republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State* which effectively gave birth to *Canada’s professional military*. The idea of “**war crimes**” as a formal and legal concept was only just emerging at the time. During the **Second Boer War (1899-1902)**, the British Imperial forces (including Canadians) rounded up *around* a sixth of the Boer population - mainly women and children - and detained them in *open boxcars* and *concentration camps*, which were overcrowded and *prone to outbreaks of disease*, with *scant food rations*. Of the 107,000 people interned in the camps, 27,927 Boers died, along with an unknown number of black Africans.

During the **Second World War**, the Allies (including Canadians) were “**saturation bombing**” German cities. The production and crewing of bombers (most Lancasters were built in Southern Ontario) is considered one of our major contributions to the Allied war effort (even though their actual strategic value is debatable). The logic of *bombing civilian targets* was highly dubious even at the time, and RCAF bombers participated in large numbers in such major events as the *firebombing of Hamburg*. In terms of bodycount, this was easily Canada’s biggest overseas atrocity.

Like the US and other countries involved in the *war in the Pacific*, during WW2 the *Canadian government seized the assets and property of Canadian citizens of Japanese origin* (*many of them born in Canada*) and rounded them up into *internment camps*. After the war they were told they would be relocated or deported, but would not get their confiscated property

back. This was recognized as illegal in 1947 and the government took steps to return the Nip’s property and compensate them for their treatment... but it remains a black scar on our history.

I can’t speak to the entirety of our nation’s history, but there was a book recently published by Canadian historian John Price, ***Orienting Canada: Race, Empire, and the Transpacific***, concerning *war crimes committed by Canadian soldiers during the Korean War*. Canadian soldiers convicted in the local courts of rape or murder were quickly returned to Canada and their sentences, with only a few exceptions, were commuted or even suspended entirely. While some of the book concerns the incredibly messy nature of legal matters with *soldiers stationed on foreign soil*, and whether the local courts in *a chaotic or corrupt nation* can be trusted, Price points out that the weight of evidence is against most of the soldiers concerned, and that most of Canadian society was extremely racist against Asians at the time.

There was *also the rather sordid episode of Duplessis orphans*. From the 40s to the 60s, Québec province joined forces with the **Catholic Church** to *forcibly take away the children of single mothers and institutionalize them in order to get subsidies from the federal government*. Some of the children were kept in *orphanages* while others were transferred in *psychiatric hospitals*, which also were under the responsibility of the church. Survivors tell of the *now well known pattern of disciplinary/sexual/mental abuse* and were also *used as human guinea pigs for medical experimentation*, including *lobotomies* and *electroshock therapy*. They *eventually* sued the provincial government in the 90s... and a settlement was reached out of court.

I would have to say the *MK-Ultra experiments* were *not only condoned, but subsidized by the Canadian government*. Dr. Ewen Cameron performed drug and shock therapy experiments on everyday citizens at the Allan memorial institute in Montréal during the 50s and 60s.

More than half a century after hundreds of children were seized from their homes and forced into residential schools, the radical sect of Russian “**Sons of Freedom Doukhobors**” is still fighting for an apology from the British Columbia government. In the 1950s, nudity and arson were the hallmarks of the “*spirit wrestlers*” but many say it was their *refusal to send their children to public schools* that brought the government into their communal villages in the Kootenay-Boundary. In 1953, the *populist, conservative Social Credit government* arrested hundreds of adults and seized children from the *Freedomites*, sending them to the *New Denver dormitory – the same one used to house Japanese-Canadians during the Second World War*. Children were held in *prison-like conditions* for the next six years, *being beaten and suffering sexual abuse* at the hands of New Denver staff.

Moreover, Canada has certainly been involved the kind of *shady neo-imperialism* that most Western countries have been getting up to since the Second World War. In the 70s and 80s they funded *an absurd scheme* to start *industrial scale wheat farming in Tanzania*. It was outwardly sold as *aid to a struggling African country*, but somebody must have questioned the *ecological wisdom of intensive wheat production on subtropical savannah*, and it was *probably* no coincidence that *Canadian companies ended up providing all the expensive machinery and fertilizer*. Anyway, that savannah wasn’t empty! and so to make way for the wheat farms *an entire nomadic people, the Barabaig, were forcibly, brutally, evicted from their ancestral lands without compensation*. It may have been the Tanzanian government that carried out the eviction, but Canadians clearly knew about it, and facilitated the whole thing in the first place.

The Case of William Sampson: A Different Affair

From an article by Jeffrey Simpson - First published in the Globe & Mail on 2 December 2003... being updated on 19 April 2018

From an article by Sheila Dabu Nonato in Postmedia News – National Post on 29 March 2012

From an article by Steve Mertl - National Affairs Contributor - Daily Brew on 2 April 2012



William Sampson, a Canadian-British citizen working in **Saudi Arabia**, was *charged with murder, tortured* and *held in solitary confinement for close to three years* in a *Saudi Arabian jail*, laid some **heavy charges against Chrétien’s government**. Supported by large elements of a *compliant Canadian media*, Mr. Sampson was *grievously wronged - not just by Saudi Arabia... but by Canada*. His complaints are now lumped together with the rendition of **Maheer Arar** in Syria after 9/11, the 2003 case of photojournalist **Zahra Kazemi** in an Iranian prison, the abandonment of **Abousfian Abdelrazik** in Sudan *for years without travel documents until the courts ordered Ottawa to bring him home*, and **Omar Khadr** in Guantanamo. These cases are all quite different, but the thread being (wrongly) pulled through all of them suggests *negligence and fear or compliance* on the part of Canadian authorities. The Sampson case, *however*, is a quite different affair.

In late-2000, authorities framed Sampson and the co-accused to *cover up a terror attack* against foreigners working in the kingdom. It coincided with a warning from **Osama bin Laden** that all foreigners leave the country. Sampson was *falsely-accused of the car-bomb death of a British man*, and *sentenced to public beheading*.

Sampson insists he was tortured into making a confession – being *suspended upside down for hours and beaten (“bastinado”) on the soles of his feet, across the backside, and the scrotum, shackled to his door to prevent him from sleeping and assaulted until he admitted to being part of the two bombings* and otherwise badly treated thereafter in a Saudi jail (i.e. being punched, being bounced off the wall, being knocked to the floor, being kicked while he was on the floor). The treatment of Sampson and others produced coerced confessions that were broadcast on Saudi television.

Sampson told **CBC News** after a pardon from Saudi Arabia’s ruler brought his release in 2003. However, he was never cleared of the murder charges.

Sampson had two sets of complaints: one against the Saudis for framing and torturing him, the other against the Canadian government. His basic allegations against the Canadian government include: The government did not work hard enough for his release, implicitly accepting his guilt – even communicating that assumption to him as... it did not wish to upset the Saudi royal family for fear of impairing Canadian-Saudi relations and access to oil.

A **letter drafted in Foreign Affairs** intended for Sampson was *supposedly* “leaked” to *The Globe and Mail*, outlining an impressive series of attempts by the government to help him, claiming *that* he refused many attempts “for reasons he knows best” - the most plausible being *that* he had convinced himself the *Canadian government*, who *apparently* knew he was being tortured, *was working against his release*: (It later emerged *that* a U.S.-Saudi prisoner swap was a factor). *Apologists claim that even if the British were more aggressive in defending the interests of their incarcerated nationals - a matter of judgment – that they were more successful in securing an earlier release for their people rings hollow when the record shows the British prisoners and he were released simultaneously*.

Sampson tried to sue his torturers before the **European Court of Human Rights**, but was unsuccessful. Those *allegations*, made to a Commons committee and in interviews, were *accepted at face value by most of the ZOG-media* which unabashedly proposed *that “there was another side of the story”* - and *that* Sampson’s charges against the Canadian government were, *at best*, distorted exaggerations: (His charges against the Saudi government, *however*, were another matter – nevertheless, in 2006, Britain’s highest court ruled *that* he couldn’t proceed because *foreign government officials are protected by diplomatic immunity*. Nor is it axiomatic that bringing the Sampson case before the United Nations would have done any good. It might even have been counterproductive.

William Sampson (age 52) suffered an *apparent* heart attack in front of his computer while researching court cases and died alone in England: His body was not discovered for almost a week. The manner of his death says everything about the cruel and tragic last years of his life.